

The Salem Witch Trials

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Background

The Salem Witch Trials began in the spring of 1692. It all started with a young group of girls who claimed that some people in the village were possessed by the Devil and accused them of practicing witchcraft. Over 150 men, women, and children were put to death over these accusations.

Religion

The mass hysteria began due to the thought that the Devil was possessing villagers. The accusers in the village were Puritans, and they believed that the witches were working alongside the Devil against them. It can be inferred that the religion of Colonial Religion was prominent in daily life due to the outcome of the situation.

Politics

Because of the large number of accusations, a court specializing in these cases was put in place in Salem. Also, later, the Massachusetts General Court protected the accused families from anymore harm, this includes financial harm. This shows that the government and religion in Colonial New England were intertwined.

Economics

Many believe that since the people typically put to death were landowners or to inherit land. They would be killed so their land would go to accusers. After the hysteria subsided many of the families with dead members were said to be given indemnities.

Society

The society of Salem, MA must have been a very close knit people. The young women accusing the Salemites of witchcraft did so because of previous turmoil between families. The accusations of witchcraft spread rapidly throughout the town of Salem, so the people there must have been very close with one another.